Boom of Big Guns.

Early in April, 1912, a man living at Hambledon, near Godalming, wrote to the Spectator, saying: "As I sat reading the other afternoon I heard, or, rather felt, a long vibrating boom several times repeated. I thought at first it was a motor van maneuvering behind the house, but found nothing there. Then I guessed what it might be and forthwith wrote to the chief gunnery officer of his majesty's ship Orion to make sure. I am therefore able to state that the discharge of the Orion's guns was distinctly audible ninety-seven statute miles from the ship, the sound taking somewhere about eleven minutes to travel the distance."

An even more remarkable instance of the immense distance at which gun fire can be heard was afforded at the time of the French victory at Steinbach. The booming of the guns was distinctly heard on the northern slopes of the Bernese Alps far down in Switzerland. The distance is just eighty miles as the crow flies, and in this case it must be remembered that the guns were not the 13.5 naval giants, but merely field artillery.—London Opinion.

Ravenous Eaters.

Gibbon tells of Soliman, a caliph in the eighth century, who died of acute indigestion in his camp near Chalcis, in Syria, just as he was about to lead an army of Arabs against Constantinople. He had emptied two baskets of eggs and figs, which he swallowed alternately, and the repast was finished with marrow and sugar. In a pilgrimage to Mecca the same caliph had eaten with impunity at a single meal seventy pomegranates, a kid, six fowls and a huge quantity of the grapes of Tayef.

Such a statement would defy belief were not others of a similar character well avouched. Louis XVI. could hardly boast of an appetite as ravenous as Soliman's, but he would eat at a sitting four platefuls of different soups, a whole pheasant, a partridge, a plateful of salad, mutton hashed with garlic, two good sized slices of ham, a dish of pastry and finish this ample repast with fruit and sweetmeats.—London Saturday Review.

Fighting a Forest Fire.

The combat with fire in the woods is usually as tense and as exciting as a conflagration in a city. From the instant smoke is discerned ascending into the blue above there is action. Upon reaching the scene the racing squads of fighters begin work by undertaking the tasks as outlined by the system. First one group starts with the cutting tools and rakes, clearing up a streak of ground several feet wide in the pathway of the fire. The men with water bags follow, wetting down this strip. Then come the back firers, who start fires from this point back into the main conflagration. When the fires meet they extinguish for want of material to burn. When the atmospheric conditions materially assist the flames the work of back firing is best done at night or when the air is stillest.—L. R. Perry in Countryside Magazine.

Proved His Case.

A teacher was holding an oral examination in an intermediate geography class one day and asked, "What is the difference between the people of a state and those of a territory?"

Only one hand was raised. But a radiant smile illuminated the face of little Donald as he rose and said, "The people of a territory cannot sing."

This answer was puzzling to all, so the teacher asked him to explain. Whereupon he said:

"The geography says that the people of a territory have no voice, so how could they sing?"—Cleveland Leader.

Making It Clear to Him.

He (bitterly)—Before we were married you never found my social deficiencies so annoying. She (sweetly)—Perhaps not, but you must allow something for the broadening influence of time. The very fact that I married you revealed my own callow inexperience.—Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Talked the Bill to Death.

One of the most dramatic holdups in congress was made in 1901 by Senator Thomas H. Carter of Montana, who talked to death a $60,000,000 rivers and harbors bill chiefly because the house had refused to appropriate money to irrigate the dry lands of the west.

"I shall do what lies in my power to prevent this bill from passing," the senator shouted. "It will not pass if my strength does not fail to such an extent that I can no longer occupy this floor, and I am in a pretty fair state of health."

To the laughter of the senate and the galleries Carter then described the clam flats and the mud banks of unheard of places for which large appropriations had been made in the present bill. He discussed the draft and tonnage of the scows and the lobster pots. He lasted for more than thirteen hours. When he was through the congress was dead, the senator's own term was ended, and it was time to inaugurate Vice President Roosevelt.—New York Herald.

Boxing With the Feet.

The form of boxing known as "la savate," in which the feet are used as well as the fists and kicks are as legitimate as blows, has for a long time been a popular exercise in French gymnasia and schools of arms. The first principle is that the whole weight of the body shall be placed on one leg and that the farthest from the adversary. The disengaged leg is used as an adjunct to the fists and flies out with astonishing swiftness and accuracy of aim. The "coup de savate" proper is the "chasse" off the right foot or "shin hit," a dangerous blow, but one that is easily avoided by raising the left knee to the level of the waist. Formidable as this method of assault and others, such as the "coup d'arret," or straight stop hit, and the "coup de figure," or swinging face kick, may be and undoubtedly are with an expert, the parries and guards are simple and sure if properly used.—Washington Star.

Commas.

The French do not as a rule employ inverted commas to indicate a dialogue, but they employ the dash to indicate a change of speakers, which is just as bad. Certainly many punctuation marks are sadly misused or overused. Dickens flung unnecessary commas all over his pages—whole battalions of them. Walter Pater also employed them with extraordinary prodigality, frequently before the word "and" where the conjunction rendered them superfluous. Pater was also overfond of the mark of exclamation, so that when he drops a "Yes" into his measured style it must needs appear as "Yes!" But, though the Bible does without inverted commas, there is real art in its punctuation. How admirably it marks the cadence and helps the drama in that great story of the prodigal son!—London Tit-Bits.

Wash All Fruit.

Incoming cargoes of fruits should be closely observed for traces of poisonous insecticides. Growers are not always careful to remove all traces of sprays before marketing their fruit. Housekeepers can protect themselves from danger from this source by washing all fruit in several waters before serving it. It would be advisable and insure greater safety to wash the fruit before placing it in the storeroom or ice chest. Sprays and powders of sufficient strength to kill insects which feed upon and destroy fruit trees and fruit would prove fatal to life if partaken of by human beings.

Necessitarians.

The philosophic term "necessitarians" is used to denote those persons that deny the freedom of will and assert that in human conduct all volitions are determined by motives that obey the law of causation as invariably as do the forces of nature. The word "determinists" was suggested as a substitute by John Stuart Mill and has been very generally adopted.—New York American.

Ancient Surgical Instruments.

A complete set of surgical instruments was found not long ago by men digging in a scrap pile in Cholophon, an ancient Greek city. In spite of the fact that they were used about 2,000 years ago, there is not much difference between them and the implements that are poked into the anatomy of a modern man. In the set are small knives with handles of decorated bronze, a metal which the Greeks thought was especially healing. There are also several pairs of forceps, one of them used to extract the heads of arrows and lances from wounded warriors. Another instrument is for the drilling of holes in the bones of the skull; another for cauterizing the flesh. Besides these are vessels for cupping and bleeding, a small covered bronze box for delicate instruments, a slab of stone for mixing certain drugs and a pair of scales which still balance perfectly. In addition to these there is a handsome purple glass beaker, probably the drinking cup of the unknown surgeon who made use of all these instruments.

Kite Flying Contests.

The Japanese are devoted to their national sport of kite flying. At contests there are two umpires, at whose command two kites of the same size are sent up together. As the kites attain a sufficient height the men try to play the kites against each other. Each party wants to bring its kite into touch with its opponent and to bring the latter down. The kite that stays up till the wind ceases or until all the others are vanquished is victorious. This requires the strength of many men working a long time. And the art of fighting one's kite well is not easily acquired. Thus fifty or sixty men labor until exhausted. Some of the kites used in the contest are things to see—huge circular structures about ninety feet in length, including the tail, and having a width of fifty or sixty feet. The ropes for the fighting kites are made of strong hemp and are more than 2,000 feet long and above one inch in thickness.—London Globe.

How Eskimo Women Die.

On her first entrance to her new hut of snow an Eskimo woman is buoyed by hope of welcoming a son. What of her last incoming to those narrow confines? She knows that the medicine man has decided that her sickness is mortal when she is laid upon her bed of snow. She gazes upon the feebly burning lamp beside her, upon food and drink set close at her hand. She sees her loved ones pass out of the doorway that needs no tunnel entrance to keep chill airs away, for presently the door is sealed with snow. The chill of death pierces through her enveloping furs. Her tomb insures that no long tarrying will be hers. The soul, companioning with her, may refresh itself with food; but, starving and freezing, her feeble body will witness even that soul's departure and know that its hour has come to perish alone.—Harper's.

A Bed For Seventeen.

Probably there is no bed capable of holding so many as seventeen in this country. But such a bed is to be found in the Mount Tet hut (10,000 feet above the sea), one of the Swiss mountain cabins belonging to the Alpine club. The bed is really constructed to hold only fourteen, but the day on which a party visited the hut was so exceptionally clear and the conditions for climbing were so favorable that twenty-one members and friends, besides the guides accompanying them, turned up at the cabin to stay the night. The guides took possession of the kitchen, and the twenty-one sorted themselves out as follows: Seventeen "slept" on the bed, three on the floor and the remaining one in a chair.

The Suave Oriental.

Admiral Sah, the Chinese naval expert, once had the misfortune to lose a cruiser. On his reporting the wreck to the Chinese admiralty he received a letter thanking him for doing so and pointing out that as the cruiser was getting somewhat wornout a replace cruiser would be much more useful. Would he, therefore, at his private expense, buy the new cruiser as quickly as possible!

Putting Him Wise.

"I'd like to make you my wife," said the practical young man, "but they tell me you can't keep house."

"Don't you believe ... tell you," rejoined the girl in ... "You get the house and put it ... name, and I'll prove to you that I can keep it."—Exchange.

An Economy.

"No money, no trunks," said the irate landlord. "If you don't pay your board bill we hold your trunks till you do."

"Splendid!" said Dedbroke. "That'll save me the expense of storage on these things of mine until next season. By-by, old man!"—Judge.

Evening Things Up.

"Going to stretch your legs?" we asked the man who supports thirteen relatives.

"Only the other one," he replied in explanation.—Exchange.

Tit For Tat.

"Until now, sir, I have never been forced to ask you for a loan."

"Until now, sir, I have never been forced to refuse you."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Break, Break, Break.

"He's suing the company that constructed his artificial limbs."

"On what grounds?"

"Nonsupport."—Buffalo Express.

The Fire Bag.

The "fire bag" is a relic of the old days of wooden ships. Every whaler and sealer used to carry such a bag. It was of tarpaulin, about one foot in length and six inches in width. It was lined with waterproof material, with interlinings of oilcloth and thick flannel. In this was placed the flint and tinderbox for kindling fire. The bag was then securely fastened with double flaps and tied in such a manner as to keep its contents dry.

It was the duty of the second mate to look after the fire bag, and in case of shipwreck to attach it at once to his person by means of stout straps provided for the purpose. So, if officers and crew were cast away on some deserted shore, the means of obtaining a fire were not wanting so long as the precious fire bag was safe.

The modern steam whalers and sealers carry a fire bag stowed in the lifeboats with the bread and water, but it is of rubber, and contains half a dozen water tight tin boxes of matches.—Philadelphia Press.

How a Siphon Acts.

The main principle of the siphon is the same as that of a suction pump—viz, that if a vacuum be created in a tube inserted in water the normal pressure of the atmosphere will cause the water to rise in the vacuum to a height of about thirty-three feet. The siphon is a bent tube, one side or leg of which is longer than the other, and the conditions of its successful operation are, first, that the shorter side or leg be placed in the water; second, the longer side or leg to hang freely over the edge of the vessel; third, a vacuum to be created throughout the length of the tube by sucking the air from the longer side. This will be immediately followed by a flow of water, which will continue as long as the mouth of the shorter side or leg of the tube remains under the surface of the water. In transferring water from a lower level care should be taken not to remove the short side from the water, as that would destroy the vacuum and cause the flow to stop.

English Conservatism.

Day and night, winter and summer, in all weathers, a tug with steam up is stationed on the Thames at the Tower bridge. It is a floating illustration of the fact that parliament is sometimes—only sometimes, of course—needlessly fussy. When the bill empowering the corporation of London to build the bridge was passing through the house of commons a provision was inserted requiring the stationing of this tug as aforesaid, so as to be handy "in case of wreck." The promoters protested that the cost of the tug would far exceed any benefit to be derived from it. The commons thought they knew better and insisted. The bridge was opened about sixteen years ago, and the tug has cost the city of London £31 per week ever since. Yet its services "in case of wreck" or any other emergency have never once been required.—London Express.

Earthquake Shocks.

There are such things as earth waves as well as ether waves. But while the ether waves have, by the genius of a Marconi, been harnessed into the service of mankind, no scientist has yet discovered any uses for earth waves or even any means of utilizing them. The shock of a seismic disturbance travels in waves at the rate of two miles a second in the actual vicinity of the disturbance, and this rate rapidly diminishes as the distance traveled by the earth waves increases. The deeper the originating movement happens to be the farther the shock travels, but the deeper the movement, on the other hand, the less extensive and usually the less serious, from the point of view of loss of life, is the visible effect on the earth's surface.

A Retiary.

A retiary was the name of a Roman gladiator armed in a peculiar way. He was furnished with a trident and net, with no more covering than a short tunic, and with these implements he endeavored to entangle and dispatch his adversary, who was called a secutor (from sequi, to follow) and was armed with a helmet, a shield and a sword. The name of the first is pronounced as if spelled re-shi-a-ry, the accent on the first syllable.

Tactful Man.

"I must say these are fine biscuits!" exclaimed the young husband.

"How could you say those are fine biscuits?" inquired the young wife's mother in a private interview.

"I didn't say they were fine. I merely said I must say so."—Washington Star.

Belgium's Military Cross.

The croix militaire of Belgium is an award founded in 1885 by Leopold II. It consists of two classes; the first is awarded to officers of twenty-five years' service, the second to noncommissioned officers and men who have served a similar period.

An Unhappy Client.

"Prisoner, have you anything to say?"

"Only this, your honor: I'd be mighty sorry if th' young lawyer you assigned to me was ever called upon to defend an innocent man."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Appreciated.

Tubb—Old boy, I want to congratulate you on your speech at the banquet last night. O'Sudds (after waiting a moment)—I know you do, pard, and you're awfully sorry you can't do it truthfully. I appreciate the effort, just the same. Nasty weather, isn't it?—Chicago Tribune.

Fishing de Luxe.

"Come on and go fishing with me."

"Aw, fishing is too rough sport. There's mud and briers and rocks and damp boats."

"I see. Your idea of fishing is to sit in a hotel lobby and angle for goldfish in a fountain."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Horrified.

"Oh, let me tell you the scandal about the first secretary's wife, Mrs. Leichtinger!"

"I've already been told of it by the comptroller's wife, Mrs. Zanglein."

"What! You associate with that old gossip!"—Munich Fliegende Blaetter.

Wind and Rain.

The wind blows in a circle around a storm, and when it blows from the north the heaviest rain is east of you; from the south, the heaviest rain is west; from the east, the heaviest rain is south; from the west, the heaviest rain is north of you.